

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

TRSE-00 DRC-01 /165 W

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R 091335Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2718

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0555

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFIN, PINT, MZ

SUBJECT: TOURISM

1. FOREIGN TOURISM HAS FALLEN OFF DRASTICALLY IN MOZAMBIQUE SINCE APRIL REVOLUTION, SPARKED BY UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT LOCAL SITUATION. "WINTER" TOURIST SEASON WHICH BEGINS IN JUNE AND PEAKS IN JULY HAS LARGELY FAILED TO MATERIALIZE, AND MASS INFLUX WHICH NORMALLY FOLLOWS BEGINNING OF SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AT BEGINNING OF JULY HAS NOT SHOWN UP. IN MID-JUNE, LOURENCO MARQUES' LEADING HOTEL POLANA HAD ONLY SOME 125 GUESTS INSTEAD OF NORMAL 400 FOR PERIOD; TOP FLOOR OF MAIN BUILDING WAS CLOSED OFF IN MAY AND SOME 50 EMPLOYEES LAID OFF. BY NOW, CITY SHOULD BE PACKED TIGHT WITH SOUTH AFRICANS, BUT FLOW IS SMALL TRICKLE COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS YEARS.

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WM MOZAMBICANS ATTRIBUTE FALLOFF OF TOURISM TO FEAR STIRRED UP BY SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS; CERTAINLY THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPERS WE SEE HERE HAVE FREQUENTLY PUBLISHED NUMEROUS, MISLEADING SCARE ARTICLES ABOUT MOZAMBIQUE. RECENT SAMPLES WHICH COME TO MIND INCLUDE TWO-PAGE SPREAD OF WAR PICTURES FROM NEAR TANZANIAN BORDER CAPTIONED "WAR RAGES ON NEAR L.M.", AND ACCOUNT OF DEMONSTRATION OF UNEMPLOYED AT GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PALACE HEADLINED "POLICE FIRE ON MOB IN LM", THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ESTABLISH THAT ANY SHOTS WERE FIRED.

3. SOUTH AFRICAN VISITORS WE HAVE TALKED TO ALL REPORT ASTONISHMENT OF THEIR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS THAT THEY HAD DARED BRAVE "DANGERS" OF LOURENCO MARQUES, AND MANY PEOPLE WHO NORMALLY VISIT MOZAMBIQUE FROM SOUTH AFRICA HAVE CANCELLED THEIR PLANS THIS YEAR. WE PRESUME SITUATION IS SIMILAR WITH REGARD PRIMARILY RHODESIAN TOURIST TRADE IN BEIRA AREA.

4. COMMENT: IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE, BUT IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT MOZAMBIQUE'S IMPORTANT TOURIST TRADE WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED FOR SOME TIME TO COME AT LEAST. MOREOVER, RISING BLACK MARKET RATES FOR FOREIGN CURRENCY (UP TO 60 ESCUDOS FOR DOLLARS, 80 ESCUDOS OR MORE FOR RAND) CONTINUES TO KEEP A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF TOURIST-GENERATED FOREIGN EXCHANGE FROM REACHING THE MOZAMBIQUE TREASURY.
REED

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOURISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LOUREN00555
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740182-1041
From: LOURENCO MARQUES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740765/aaaacdwi.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOURISM
TAGS: AFIN, PINT, ETRD, MZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005